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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001190

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2017  
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [VT](#)  
SUBJECT: CHALDEAN CHURCH OFFICIAL CONVEYS DECISION ON MNF-I  
OCCUPATION OF SEMINARY BUILDING

REF: A) BAGHDAD 1173 B) VATICAN 0074 C) BAGHDAD 1183  
D) EMAIL NAJIM-GANSER 04 05 07

Classified By: DEPUTY POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT GILCHRIST, FOR REASONS  
1.4 (B,D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: On April 5, Bishop Shlemoon Wardoni, the Vice Patriarch of the Chaldean Church conveyed the Church's decision to PolOff that the Coalition Forces must vacate the Combat Outpost currently located at the Chaldean Seminary in Baghdad's Doura district. Coalition Forces and the outpost's leadership were informed of the Church's decision immediately, and will begin executing its relocation plan. On April 6, a Chaldean member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives (CoR) Yonadam Kanna and Bishop Wardoni confirmed that Patriarch Delly has agreed not to protest against the Coalition's presence at the seminary through the media. Kanna also confirmed he would not raise the issue publicly during the next CoR session. END SUMMARY.

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CHALDEAN CHURCH: VACATE PROPERTY, STAY IN DOURA  
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12. (C) On April 5, Bishop Shlemoon Wardoni informed PolOff that the Chaldean Church's final decision was for Coalition Forces to vacate the Combat Outpost (COP) located at the Church's Babel College of Philosophy and Theology seminary in Doura (ref A). Bishop conveyed that he, other Bishops, and Patriarch Delly made the decision jointly after much deliberation. Bishop Wardoni requested that the Coalition assist the seminary rector retrieve some important documents during an upcoming visit to the seminary on April 8. He added that while the Church hopes for a continued military presence in Doura, it could not risk having the outpost physically located on the seminary's grounds. Bishop Wardoni believes that the outpost's location on seminary grounds is partly responsible for fueling the recent, increased targeting of Chaldeans by Muslim extremists. According to the Bishop, over the past month, he had personally paid for the release of several Chaldean priests that had been kidnapped for ransom -- in amounts ranging from 25,000 USD to 95,000 USD each.

13. (C) Bishop Wardoni accepted the Coalition's request for two months to vacate and restore the seminary to pre-occupation condition (ref B). PolOff assured Bishop Wardoni that Coalition forces would respect and comply fully with the decision and would coordinate with the seminary's rector on retrieving the Church's papers from the seminary. The Bishop also expressed gratitude for U.S. assistance on establishing the status of four seminary guards, who had been arrested by Iraqi Ministry of Interior National Police and for the efforts of senior military leaders to obtain their release (ref C).

¶4. (C) MNF-I leadership was immediately informed of the Church's request to vacate the seminary, along with its desire for continued Coalition Forces presence in Doura. MNF-I has stated that they will comply fully with the Church's wishes.

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CHALDEANS: ISSUE RESOLVED, PROTEST UNNECESSARY  
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¶5. (C) On April 6, PolOff asked Yonadam Kanna, a Chaldean CoR member, to advise his Church contacts against protesting the COP via a media blitz or during the next Council of Representatives session on April 10 (ref D). Kanna agreed that media exposure could inflame the situation. He also pledged to contact Bishop Wardoni, the Chaldean Ambassador to the Vatican, and Patriarch Delly to advise against public criticism of the outpost through the media. Later on April 6, both Kanna and Bishop Wardoni then confirmed to PolOff that the Patriarch, having understood the Coalition will vacate the seminary, has agreed to resolve the matter privately.

¶6. (C) Kanna also echoed Bishop Wardoni's desire that the Coalition remain in Doura, but maintain no public association with the Chaldean community and their facilities. He suggested several alternate COP locations in Doura, such as a police station, and agreed to provide details on possible locations to the Coalition Forces leadership. (Comment: Post will continue to facilitate coordination between the Chaldean Church and the Coalition as it begins vacating the seminary. End comment.)  
CROCKER